● 868 Blackfoot NF6

[For the learning of skills necessary in warfare, see Category 702.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

The children, at least the boys, played about and did as they pleased. Not so with the girls. Their duties began at a very early age. They carried wood and water for their mothers, sewed moccasins, and as soon as they were strong enough, were taught to tan robes and furs, make lodges, travois, and do all other woman's — and so menial — work. The boys played at mimic warfare, hunted around in the brush with their bows and arrows, made mud images of animals, and in summer spent about half their time in the water. In winter, they spun tops on the ice, slid down hill on a contrivance made of buffalo ribs, and hunted rabbits.

Shortly after noon, the hunters began to return, bringing in deer, antelope, buffalo, elk, occasionally bear, and, sometimes, beaver which they had trapped. The camp began to be more lively. In all directions persons could be heard shouting out invitations to feasts. Here a man was lying back on his couch singing and drumming; there a group of young men were holding a war dance; everywhere the people were eating, singing, talking, and joking. As the light faded from the western sky and darkness spread over the camp, the noise and laughter increased. In many lodges, the people held social dances, the women, dressed in their best gowns, ranged on one side, the men on the other; all sung, and three or four drummers furnished an accompaniment; the music was lively if somewhat jerky. At intervals the people rose and danced, the "step" being a bending of the knees and swinging of the body, the women holding their arms and hands in various graceful positions.

With the night came the rehearsal of the wondrous doings of the gods. These tales may not be told in the daytime. Old Man would not like that, and would cause any one who narrated them while it was light to become blind. All Indians are natural orators, but some far exceed others in their powers of expression. Their attitudes, gestures, and signs are so suggestive that they alone would enable one to

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

individuals and small groups. The cows were in prime condition and the Blackfeet concentrated on gathering the meat and berries to be dried and stored for winter use.

The most common technique for hunting buffalo during the late nineteenth century was the chase in which mounted hunters followed the herd and each man selected an animal, rode it down and killed it. By this time the Piegan had abandoned the earlier method of driving the herds into confining canyons, compounds or over a cliff to be killed and butchered below. Men hunted on foot only when they lacked a buffalo hunting horse, or when heavy snowfall made horse travel impossible. Although other animals might be hunted on foot, the horse was of major importance in hunting buffalo—the Blackfeet "staff of life."

Horses, then, were a form of production capital, and their importance led to another form of economic pursuit, the horse raid. A man could build a horse herd by buying animals from his neighbors, by having them given to him, by natural increase among his already acquired stock, or by raiding and taking horses from enemy camps. This was a dangerous but quick way to build capital, and success in such dangerous pursuits added to a person's prestige, so horse raiding became ". . . an established industry among the Blackfeet" (Grinnell 1907:244).

Labor was quite sharply divided by sex. Men were the hunters and defenders, women the collectors and manual laborers. In addition to hunting and fighting, men butchered the animals while on the hunt, made their weapons, shields, and drums, and painted designs on these. They also made pipes, horn utensils and often their own ornaments, leggings, and coats.

Women's work makes a longer list. They occasionally helped with light butchering when they accompanied a hunt, but did all butchering, preparing and preserving of meat once it had been brought to camp. Women gathered plant foods, prepared meals, made the clothing, packed, moved, and unpacked provisions and possessions, carried wood and water, cut tepee poles, put up and dismantled the tepees, made and decorated leather carrying bags (parfleches) and other containers, manufactured utensils, dressed and tanned skins and hides, made saddles and horse gear, made travois, and reared the children.

It would appear that the women did the most "work," which may be overlooking the fact that hunting, an avocation for us, was often an arduous occupation. Nonetheless, it was true that men had more time for socializing. Young men often dressed up in their paint and finest clothing, to stroll around the camp in order to be admired by the girls; and the older men spent much of their leisure time in feasting one another.

A similar division of labor and male advantage was a part of childhood. Young boys were free to play, until as they grew older they were given the task of caring for the horses. The games they played were preparation for hunting and raiding. At a much earlier age girls began to carry wood and water, do light gathering and collecting, and take lessons in the preparation of foods, clothing and in dressing hides—learning the women's work.

The Blackfeet were much concerned with personal property and had their own definition of what it entailed. Resources were unowned, food and materials

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

492 On the run the hunter carried the long end of his bridle rope coiled and tucked closely under his belt. If he should be thrown but not badly hurt or shaken up, he could grab the free end of this long line as it paid out on the ground and retrieve his horse, perhaps in time to remount and continue the chase.

224 Usually the chase lasted until the running herd outdistanced the pursuing hunters. Four or five buffalo cows was about the greatest number a good bowman riding a fine horse could dispatch on a single chase. Most hunters rarely killed more than two buffalo. A man riding an inferior horse had to be satisfied with killing the slower-running bulls.

224 Boys of ten years or older, mounted on frisky colts, rode after the calves left in the wake of a running herd. They imitated the
• 868 hunting techniques of their elders, riding in close and shooting the calves with bow and arrow. In this way they gained experience in buffalo hunting, so that by the time they reached their middle teens they had sufficient confidence and skill to chase adult buffalo with the men.

224 The chase was not without its dangers. Sometimes horses stumbled on uneven ground, stepped into badger holes, or were gored by wounded bulls. Riders were thrown and severely injured or killed. Generally, the less well trained his buffalo horse, the greater was the rider's chance of accident.

When the men finished their killing, their leader waved to the women to bring the pack animals. Meanwhile, the hunters located the buffalo they had killed by identifying their arrows
224 in the fallen beasts. Using common butcher knives obtained from
412 the traders, a man and wife could cut up a buffalo in about an hour. Surely butchering must have been more of a task for their prehistoric ancestors, who had to saw away at the carcass with knife blades of stone.

224 If the chase was made far from camp or if meat was very plentiful only the best parts of the buffalo were taken. This was known as "light butchering." But when food was scarce or winter approaching and large quantities of meat were needed, "heavy butchering" of the entire animal was more common.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Lazy Boy, the oldest living Piegan a decade ago, followed this traditional custom in naming my younger daughter. He gave her the name Many-Steals-Horses-Woman, explaining that as a young man he had been very successful in capturing horses from enemy camps so he thought this name would bring her good fortune in whatever she tried to do.

Elaborate cradles were luxury items, uncommon among the Blackfeet a century ago. When walking or riding on horseback, women commonly carried their babies on their backs, inside their robes or blankets. The mother stood with her back bent, grasped the infant by both arms, swung it over her shoulders, then quickly drew her robe about her own body and that of the child. Blackfoot mothers nursed their babies until long after they were able to walk. Indeed, some mothers continued to nurse their children until they were five or six years old, believing this would prevent another pregnancy until their youngest child was old enough to look after himself.

Children were taught the elements of good manners and respect for their elders. They were expected to sit quietly while adults were talking in the tipi, to perform their chores promptly, to observe the taboos of the family medicine bundles, and to help the aged and show particular respect to them. They were taught to take teasing gracefully. But if a child of about their own age struck them, they were to fight back to the best of their ability.

The mother was responsible for the education of her daughters. The little girl began to learn about women's responsibilities by watching her mother and grandmothers at their tasks. She imitated their actions in her childhood play. She began to help her mother in such light tasks as picking berries, and graduated to the heavier work of digging roots and carrying firewood and water for the lodge. As the girl grew older, she received instructions in dressing hides, preparing foods, making clothing, and in the women's crafts of geometric painting, porcupine quillwork, and beadwork. A girl was expected to become proficient in these crafts before she married. At the annual sun dance mothers ex-

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

plained to their daughters the honor bestowed upon the medicine woman because she had always been true to her husband.

Girls dressed in garments which were miniatures of those worn by their mothers. But small boys often went nude in the summer. Or, at most, they wore only a breechclout in warm weather.

Blackfoot children were accustomed to horses from infancy. As babies they rode on their mothers' backs atop a horse when camp was moved. When they were able to sit up, they rode on the travois or on horseback behind their mothers. At an early age, usually by their fifth year, they were taught to ride alone. The child was lifted into a high-horned woman's saddle on a gentle horse, and rawhide ropes were passed back and forth between pommel and cantle on each side and tied to prevent the child's falling. A parent led the horse around the camp at a slow walk. If the child was afraid, he could hold on to the saddle horn. As he gained in experience and confidence, he was led at a faster pace and was taught to use the reins to control his mount. When camp was moved, the child was tied in the saddle and the horse was led by an adult. Soon he was riding alone. By the time most children were six or seven years old, they were good riders. Some rode little saddles made for them by fond mothers or grandmothers. They also learned to ride bareback and to ride double, and they frequently competed in impromptu horse races.

Fathers looked after the education of the boys, but they were allowed much more freedom than were girls. Boys were taught to make miniature bows and arrows. They were encouraged to take part in rough, active body- and character-building games and sports. At the sun dance encampment fathers pointed out to their sons the great warriors of their tribe and cited the honors that came to men who were brave and successful at the arts of war. The hero-worshiping youth was told again and again the stirring narratives of the outstanding fighting men of his tribe, both past and present. He was reminded of the old Blackfoot proverb, "It is better to die in battle than of old age or sickness."

Boys of about ten years of age were entrusted with the daily

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

524 A measure of the fun-loving nature of the Blackfeet may be judged from the great number and variety of their games and
524 amusements for young and old. Children's play varied with their
857 ages, with the sexes, and with the seasons. It had real educational value. In their play children imitated many of the activities of
524 their elders and so painlessly prepared themselves for the re-
857 sponsibilities of adult life. At play girls learned the rudiments of baby care, craftwork, housekeeping, and moving camp. Boys'
868 competitive sports were rowdy enough to toughen their bodies and varied enough to develop their agility and skill in the use of weapons. This play helped to improve their bodily co-ordination and gave them valuable practice in making quick, sure decisions in the midst of action—excellent training for the future
524 hunter and warrior. Adults found relaxation from the cares and tensions of daily life in games of skill or chance and in spectator
[525] sports. The common custom of gambling on the outcome intensified their interest in these activities.

Older children made their own playthings and gaming equipment. Little children's toys were made for them by their elders. A little girl of six or seven years who accompanied her grandmother into the brush to collect firewood might beg the old woman to make her a birch doll. The grandmother would cut a section of a birch limb about one foot long and four inches in diameter with her axe. She used her butcher knife to cut a groove around the piece about four inches from one end. This formed the doll's shoulder line. Above this line she whittled a crude, knob-like head and bored little holes in one side of the knob to suggest eyes, nose, and mouth. The simple doll had no ears, hair, or legs. The body retained the unaltered form of the birch cylinder below the shoulder line. Little girls clothed these dolls by simply wrapping a piece of buckskin or trade cloth around the cylinder.

As girls grew older, they wanted more realistic dolls. Then their mothers or grandmothers made them dolls with arms and legs as well as heads of skin or trade cloth stuffed with grass. The facial features were delineated with thread or trade beads.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

mare over 4 years of age. Some people preferred a former saddle horse 8 or 9 years old to draw the travois.

An unbroken horse would not haul a travois. The horse had to be specially trained for this task. One common method of training employed in buffalo days was to make a simple harness, consisting of a rawhide rope around the horse's neck with a long rawhide line attached to it at each side extending backward and tied to a dry buffalo hide on the ground a few feet back of the horse's hind legs. Some people preferred a single rawhide rope tied to the horse's tail and the buffalo hide. The rope was always long enough so that the horse could not kick the hide. While one or more men led the horse by a halter, one to three men or boys rode on the hide over a selected plot of ground relatively smooth and free from stones. The horse might jump and kick at first. It might even break away from the leaders and

FIGURE 8.—Breaking a horse to the travois by training it to drag a weighted buffalo hide, Blackfoot.

spill the riders. But in time it became used to being led and to the weight drawn behind it, and quieted down. Then it would submit to the travois. (See fig. 8.)

Other Blackfoot Indians preferred to train travois horses by making them pull tipi poles crossed over their heads, as in the horse travois, or two heavy cottonwood poles similarly arranged. This makeshift travois was placed on the horse for short periods on several successive days until the horse became accustomed to the weight. Then the real travois was substituted. A horse trained to the travois readily learned to carry the additional weight of a person riding on its back. However, unless it had previously been used for riding, it would not make a good saddle horse.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO RIDE

Blackfoot children were accustomed to horses from infancy. As babies they were carried on their mother's backs on horseback when

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

camp was moved. When they were able to sit up they rode on the travois or behind their mothers on horseback. They became familiar with the motion of a walking horse, so that by the time they were old enough to learn to ride alone their fear of horses was partially overcome. Training involved primarily teaching children to maintain their balance on horseback and to use the reins, and the proper horse commands to control the actions of their mounts.

Riding lessons were given children by their fathers or mothers near the lodges in the camp of their band. No effort was made to clear the camp of other riders or children when a child took his first lesson.

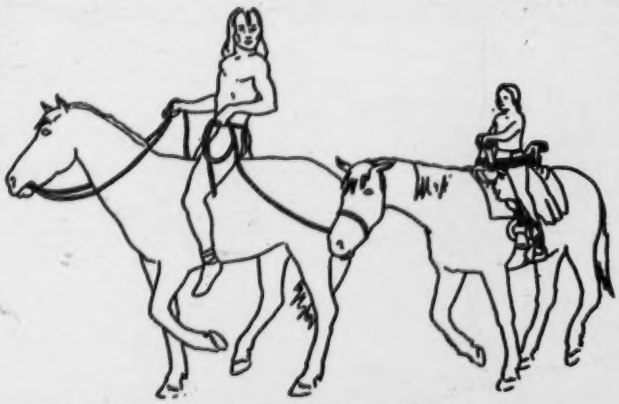

FIGURE 9.—Teaching a child to ride by tying him in a woman's saddle on a gentle horse, Blackfoot.

In fact, other children watched and sometimes made fun of the awkward efforts of the learners. The gentlest riding horse owned by the family was employed in teaching children to ride. If the horse was gentle, the mother usually served as teacher, regardless of the sex of the child. If the family owned no gentle horse, the father took charge.

My eldest informants said they learned to ride in this manner: The child was lifted into a high-horned woman's saddle and rawhide ropes were passed back and forth between the pommel and cantle on each side, and tied securely to prevent the child's falling. If afraid, the child could also hold onto the saddle horn. The parent, afoot or astride another horse, led the child's horse about camp by a hackamore. (See fig. 9.) At first the horse was led at a slow walk. As the child gained in experience and confidence, the horse was led at a swifter

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

492 868

pace, and the child was taught to use the reins and control his mount. When camp was moved, the child was tied in the saddle and the horse on which he rode was led by an adult.

About the year 1869, a fatal accident caused the Piegan to change their method of teaching children to ride. Woman Shoe was leading his little son tied in the saddle when the horse became frightened, pulled the lead rope from Woman Shoe's grasp, and ran off. The saddle girth loosened, the saddle slipped, and the child was kicked to death. Thereafter most Piegan placed their children in high-horned saddles as before, but relied upon them to keep their balance by holding the pommel, without the aid of ties.

In some families a girl was taught to ride a travois horse. A travois, unencumbered by baggage, was attached to a travois horse and the child placed on the horse's back in a woman's saddle. The mother led the horse.[33]

Informants claimed a Blackfoot child usually learned to ride alone in his fifth year. Children of other Plains Indian tribes seem to have learned to ride at an equally early age.[34] [171]

At the age of 6 or 7 most Blackfoot boys and girls were good riders. Some youngsters rode little saddles, of the "prairie chicken snare" or pack-saddle type, which their fond mothers or grandmothers made for them. A small boy sometimes tied a short rawhide rope to his horse's mane. He employed a handhold on this rope as an aid in climbing onto his horse's back.

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[33] In spite of the demonstrated danger of the early Blackfoot method of teaching children to ride, it was employed by many other tribes of the Plains and Plateau. Two Kiowa informants told me they had learned to ride at 4 or 5 years of age by being tied in high-horned saddles on gentle horses, led by their fathers or mothers. Numerous references in the literature to children tied in the saddle when camp was moved suggest the same method of teaching on the part of other tribes. In 1805, Larocque and Mackenzie saw that Crow children, too young to ride alone, were tied in the saddle when camp was moved (Larocque, 1910, p. 64; Mackenzie, 1889, p. 345). Gordon (Chardon, 1932, p. 347; and Denig, 1933, p. 36) also reported this Crow practice. Ferris (1940, p. 301), in his general description of Indians of the northern Rockies (period 1830–1835), noted, "Their children of three or four years of age are lashed firmly on top of their packs, and are often endangered by the horses running away with them, though I never saw one severely injured in consequence." In 1839, Farnham (1906, p. 329) saw a little Cayuse boy "but three years old" who rode alone "lashed to the horse he rode." Members of the Long Expedition (1820) observed that Kiowa-Apache children "too young to be able by their own strength to sit on a horse (were) lashed by their legs to the saddle" (James, 1823, vol. 2, p. 103). This method was reported for the Comanche in 1865 (U. S. Comm. Ind. Affairs, 1867, p. 38). Although these data would suggest that this practice was Plains-wide, Eagle Bird, an aged Oglala, told me it was not the custom of his tribe, stating that it was too dangerous. [171]

[34] Mackenzie (1889, p. 345), in 1805, noted that Crow children above the age of 6 could manage a horse. While Gordon (Chardon, 1932, p. 347) wrote of the same tribe (period 1820), "At four or five years of age they will ride alone and guide the horse." Tixier (1940, p. 167) marveled at Osage boys who, in 1840, "were riding alone bareback, and managed their horses with skill" although they "could not have been more than five or six years old." A Southern Cheyenne woman claimed her mother told her she learned to ride at the age of 4 (Michelson, 1932, p. 1).

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Four or five buffalo cows were the most informants could recall having been killed on a single chase by the best Blackfoot marksman with the best horse under him. Most hunters rarely killed more than one or two buffalo at a chase. Men with inferior buffalo horses had to be satisfied with killing the slower running bulls. The owner of a poorly trained or short-winded horse could not hope to kill any buffalo via the chase.[13]

BOYS' HUNTING OF BUFFALO CALVES

Boys 10 years of age or older gained their first experience in buffalo hunting on the fair weather hunts from spring through fall. After the men started a herd and rode after it the boys, on 1- or 2-year-old colts, followed after the calves left in the wake of the running herd. They imitated the actions of their elders, riding in close and shooting the calves with bows and arrows. In this way they gained skill and confidence so that in their middle teens they could begin hunting adult buffalo.[14] Nearly all my elderly, male Blackfoot informants had chased buffalo calves. Only the oldest of them had had opportunities to kill adult buffalo before these animals were exterminated from the Blackfoot Country.

Three Calf said that as a boy he helped hunters pack meat to camp and was also given the task of cleaning buffalo intestines. Boys were not taken on winter hunts on horseback.

HUNTING ACCIDENTS

Accidents were not infrequent in hunting buffalo. Horses stumbled on uneven ground, stepped in badger holes, or were gored by wounded bulls. Riders were thrown and injured or killed. Lazy Boy recalled that Lame Bull, the Piegan head chief at the time of the 1855 treaty, was killed while running buffalo 3 years later. Amid the dust of the chase Lame Bull's horse did not move adroitly enough to avoid an old bull that attacked him. The horse fell on Lame Bull breaking his neck and crushing his ribs. Generally the less intelligent and well-trained the horse, the greater was the chance of serious accident in the chase.[15]

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[13] Contemporary statements regarding other tribes give similar maximum figures. Tixier (1940, p. 193) among the Osage found that "a good horse can overtake three or four cows in one hunt." Boller (1868, p. 227) noted that among the Mandan-Hidatsa "the more expert hunters will kill from three to five cows in a chase."

[14] Grinnell (1923, vol. 1, p. 113) reported Cheyenne boys' practice of hunting buffalo calves. He wrote that "if on his first chase a boy killed a calf, his father was greatly pleased, and if a well-to-do man, he might present a good horse to some poor man, and in addition might give a feast and invite poor people to come and eat with him."

[15] Writers on the Cheyenne (Hamilton, 1905, p. 29), Hidatsa-Mandan (Boller, 1868, p. 224), and Pawnee (Dunbar, 1880, p. 331) have mentioned the frequency and seriousness of accidents that occurred among these tribes while running buffalo.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

recognized. A good race horse or a buffalo runner was worth several common pack animals. Consequently the best horses had a premium value in trades involving items other than horses. Even more subtle distinctions were made between the worth of two race horses or two buffalo horses. Wealthy men were expected to pay more dearly than were people of modest means.

Live horses were always more valuable to the Blackfoot than were dead ones. These Indians seldom killed horses for food, and then only in cases of dire necessity. The hide, hair, teeth, and other horse products made into useful articles were derived from animals which had died of accidental or natural causes. The number of these items was very restricted in comparison with the great variety of useful articles derived from buffalo.

INFLUENCE ON RECREATION

The prominent role of the horse in Blackfoot children's play during the Horse Culture Period mirrored the importance of that animal in the life of their parents at that time. Children's play of the Pedestrian Culture Period probably tended to imitate the serious activities of their elders, and so differed from that of later children. When boys made and played with wood, stone, or mud toy horses, or pretended to ride boldly on hobbyhorses; when girls "moved camp" with conventionalized stick horses equipped with miniature reproductions of riding and transport gear bearing miniature household equipment packaged and packed according to the custom of their culture, they were pleasantly and painlessly preparing themselves for more responsible participation in a culture in which management and use of horses were important aspects of daily life.

Horse racing probably replaced foot racing as the most popular sport of Blackfoot adults. Buffalo hunting, interband communications, and intertribal warfare in the Pedestrian Culture Period must have placed a premium upon physical stamina and speed of foot. The great Miniconjou chief, One Horn, bragged to Catlin of his former ability to run down a buffalo on foot and kill it with an arrow, as well as his record of having won every foot race he had entered (Catlin, 1841, vol. 1, p. 211). Yet the ability to run down a buffalo may have been fairly common in earlier times, when everyone hunted on foot. As late as the middle of the 19th century Denig (1930, p. 566) noted that next to being a good hunter and warrior men of the Upper Missouri tribes prized "the name of being a good runner (fast and long)." Foot racing survived among the historic Blackfoot in intersociety contests at the Sun Dance encampment, but horse racing surpassed it in popular interest. Stamina, a quality necessary to the

The male relatives were obligated to care for the widow. Women did own property, nevertheless, and might dispose of it according to their own wishes, but should they receive horses from a dying man, a close male relative would be obliged to care for this property.

Under the violent fluctuation of economic fortunes due to enemy raids, uncontrolled livestock disease and severe winters, inheritance was usually not a very significant factor in Blackfoot social life. Though there are notorious cases where young men remained idly in camp because they had inherited sufficient horses to make the warpath unnecessary, such cases stand out by dint of their rarity. Most obligations were settled prior to death, and in mourning dissipation of the property was speedy, relatives and non-relatives alike not unwilling to be present at the distraught hand-outs of the dead man's possessions. Then the immediate kinsmen were left to mourn, stripped of property, themselves careless of what happened. Nevertheless, in distributing the property, the prior obligations to siblings as compared with own children is striking.

Throughout life reciprocal obligations between brothers was stressed. In childhood the older brother was responsible for introducing a younger brother into the boy's life of the camps. Later he took his younger brother on his first war party. As repayment for this instruction, the younger brother would give a sizable fraction of his booty to the older, and this practice would continue indefinitely after the young man had showed his capability of independent fighting. Once established as a warrior, the young man would take a still younger sibling on war parties, in order to instruct him. This practice established a chain of obligations to repay older brothers and instruct younger brothers who in their turn would repay their instructors.

Competition for honors was a potentially disintegrating force in the relations between brothers, but this system of obligations solidified fraternal relations. In this light the prior obligations to brothers over sons is to be understood: A man's son normally received aid not from his father but from his father's younger brother who would ordinarily be the son's "older brother." Thus interaction in certain spheres was greater with members of adjacent age grades than with one's parents. This was particularly true with reference to economic exchange, and these economic obligations continued through life, finally to be expressed in a man's last words on his deathbed. The main exception to this rule was with a favored child, where the father himself chose to assume the rôle normally falling to an older brother. In accordance with such sentimental ties, the favored child usually received the bulk of a man's property, in contrast to the usual emphasis on sibling solidarity which succeeded in channeling property toward siblings.

Residence after marriage also assumed no specific forms. Not only might

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

followed her whenever she would take them. She was finally killed during one of her war adventures.

Because this woman died sometime around 1850 the actual facts of her life are now hard to separate from the popular legends. My grandmothers of today still talk about her, and an old book about her life can be found on some library shelves. However, all the stories agree that this woman was very successful in all but her final efforts, and that she was well liked and respected by her people. It is generally believed that she was also a holy woman who put up Sun Dances, for which she qualified by never marrying or taking a lover in her life. It is said that she pledged herself to Sun, as the result of a vision of power.

The popular story is that Running Eagle began life as an ordinary Blackfoot girl named Brown Weasel Woman. She had two brothers and two sisters, and her father was a well-known warrior. When she became of the age that boys begin to practice hunting, she asked her father to make a set of bow and arrows with which she could practice. He did so, though not without some argument from his wives. It is said that he even allowed her to go with him buffalo hunting, and that she learned to shoot well enough to bring some down.

It was during one of the buffalo hunts with her father that this unusual girl is said to have first shown her warrior's courage. There were only a few Blackfoot hunters in the party, and it was not far from the camps when an enemy war party attacked and chased it. As the people rode toward the camp at top speed, Brown Weasel Woman's father had his horse shot out from under him. One of the bravest deeds performed by warriors in the old days was to brave the enemy fire while riding back to rescue a companion who was left on foot. This is what the daughter did for her father, both of them making their escape on her horse, after she stopped to unload the fresh meat that was tied on behind her. When word of the attack reached the rest of the tribe, a great crowd

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

593 302 all about going for a ride. Instead I kept hanging around the window so I could look in and see if she was up yet. Finally I saw her sitting up. She had real long hair, and my mother was combing it. Then my father told my mother to take her outside. We had no toilets in those days. By the time they got back I was already inside and sitting down. Ponah kept looking over at me, but she didn't say nothing. I think she knew that something was wrong, but she didn't know what. My father told my mother to feed her. She asked my mother: "Are there any eggs?" I told her: "Yes, there is a big bird flying around outside and he really has big eggs!" My mother got mad at me right away, but I just said: "Well, she wants bird eggs, and I just want to help her." She just told me to keep quiet.

So, the eggs got cooked and served on a plate to Ponah. She was just about to take her first bite, when I called her, quietly: "Ponah!" She looked at me, and I just pointed at my face. She screamed out loud: "Her face is painted!" and she threw herself back and dropped all her food and just kept screaming like she was injured. My father jumped up, and I ran out the door as fast as I could toward where my horse was. Nobody caught me, but they called after me: "Come back and we will wash your face so that she can be painted first." I was almost by my horse, so I just called to them: "No, I'm already painted, why should I want to wash it off again?" Usually I wiped my face right away after I got painted, but this time I kept the paint on all day. She just kept crying.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

by Paula Weasel Head

868 462 592 When we were small we learned about household work by watching our mother, the way that she did things. She was a hard worker and she was very good at everything. That was

512 when he had finished about half of it he would spill the rest out. I think he did that just to show who was the boss. He sure thought highly of himself.

593 While he was drinking his tea I would sit real close to him. He would cuddle me, and my sister would sit across the room and make faces at me. When the food was ready my mother would feed him, and I would eat out of his bowl, with him. My sister thought I was a real brat.

868 251 When I was small I used to have my own sackful of dried meat. My mother always took me along to get the government rations, once a week. When we got home with them she would start cutting up the meat. I sat next to her and did whatever she did. She had a string across the room, up by the ceiling, from which she hung the strips of meat to dry. She put up a string for me and I hung up my own strips. I had my own bags of serviceberries, chokecherries, and bullberries. All of these 415 237 I had dried. While I was picking them and drying them my father would make me nice bags from the skins of unborn calves and other small animals. I kept all my things in bags back then.

868 857 Sometimes I would have lots of dried food stored up, and my mother would tell me: "Boil some of your meat, we don't have anything to eat in this home." I would jump up and start to cook. We had matching cooking outfits, my sister and I, that our father bought for us at the trading post. We had little cast-iron pots—the kind that have three short legs to stand on. In Blackfoot we call them "having tits." They were really cute little pots.

I would get out my little three-legged pot and prepare the meal. Usually my meals consisted of dried meat, which I boiled with some fat and dried berries. This was training for me to learn how to be when I got older.

593 I always served my father first. One time I was serving out my food and I got to my sister. She said: "I'm not going to eat any of her food, because flies have had babies on them

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

778
796
123

[868] The highlight of each visit from the Old Man was when we sat down by the altar, made incense, and sang the ancient songs for the Medicine Pipe ceremony. Thus has the knowledge passed from Teacher to Teacher, through countless generations.

person on the reserve to let the cattle graze there. This practice began when Eagle Bear accepted the first four-dollar payment. That was in the year number 1904 when I was born. Small Priest [the People's name for Father Dusette] baptized me, but he didn't give me a name. I don't know why I wasn't called after my father, Dog Child. When I was not many days old, I was called First Rid and I grew up with that name.

When I was a little bit old-personlike [when first active as a child], my father taught me to ride. This was during the number four winter of my life. There was still a lot of horseback riding then and a lot of travois for transportation. Very few had slim-wheelers [buggies]. I was tied on a horse, and the horse was tied to a picket. Sometimes I used to go to sleep on the horse. My mother made a pad saddle out of blue jeans and stuffed with big-head fur [sheep's wool]. There were stirrups at that time; I used to see them, they were made of wood. But my stirrups were rawhide thongs, which fit my young feet better.

I grew up in the land of the Men with Many Wives [Cardston, Alberta, is a Mormon town]. My father was a hunter and he had many rifles; a slim-gum-arrow [.30/30 caliber]; a double-barrelled hunting gun; also a Number 22, called a gopher rifle. And he was one of the first to own a Number 303 rifle [.303 caliber]. He set traps for coyote, beaver, and muskrat.

My father made me eat all kinds of deer. The People of the long-ago liked to eat the part of the mother animal that the baby animal sucked on. The only thing they didn't eat is the milk of the big white ' ads [mountain sheep]. I heard that this milk is very bitter.

When I killed an elk, my father showed me they have seven nest lumps [nipples], not four or six or eight. He showed me that badgers have blood clots on their ribs. We sprinkled gun powder on the badger's blood and from looking at our reflection in the blood we knew how long we were going to live. My father saw from his

The Baker Massacre

I was born seventy-nine winters ago on Yellow (Judith) River. 000
My father, Bear Head, was a tall, handsome man and a great warrior. My mother, Fair Singing Woman, was beautiful. Though quite young, she had even then become a sacred woman, one of the women who, every summer, build a great lodge to give to Sun. Dearly my father and mother loved me, and I loved them. As soon as I could walk, my mother furnished me with soft, beaded, deer leather clothes for summer, furs for winter. And my father gave me little bows and 868
arrows and taught me to ride gentle horses; gave me six horses when 524
I was in my sixth winter. Four of them were mares, so I was soon having quite a band of horses of my own. I loved to play with the [776]
boys, and I loved to sit before the evening lodge fires listening to the warriors and hunters telling of their brave deeds—the old men telling of the power and goodness of Sun and all the other gods.

Came my eighth summer, and my father, getting ready to go with 701
a party against some of our enemies, said that I must go, too. My 702
mother objected; cried; said that I was too young to go to war, that it would be too dangerous for her little one. Said my father to her: "Last night, as I slept, Sun gave me a vision. We were a war party. [787]
Our young one was traveling at my side. We discovered enemies, fought, and killed them. The meaning of that is plain. It is that your young First Rider goes with me, with our party, and that he will survive the dangers that we encounter. And well you know that I was of his age when I first took to the war trail. So must he now go. I shall make of him a real warrior."

First Rider—that was the name given me when I was born; given [551]
me by an old medicine man because of one of his visions, in which he [553]
saw a member of a war party be first to take an enemy horse and [787]
ride it off.

Well, my mother knew that my father would have his way about me, so she made no more objection to my going but got together the things that I would need, extra pairs of moccasins, a rope, awl, and sinew thread; and crying, she said to me: "You have to go. I shall [782]
pray, constantly pray the Above Ones to give you safe return to me."

I was eager to go. I wanted to become a great warrior, kill many enemies, take many enemy horses, and so be honored, made a chief by

25: Ewers E,G-5 (1941-1951) 1963 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

316 Museum, Smithsonian Institution, as "a sandstone containing some
135 feldspar, and some quantity of calcium carbonate." Modern Indian
276 pipemakers regard this stone as easier to work than the stone from
[128] Pipestone Cliff, but its rougher texture does not allow the smooth surface finish that can be given to pipes fashioned from the Pipestone Cliff material.

PIPESTONE FROM SOUTH MOCCASIN MOUNTAINS

In the early 1940's William Willcomb, a White friend of some of the Piegan pipemakers, brought them quantities of dickite, a variety of nonplastic Kaolin, from the south side of the south Moccasin Mountains about 15 miles west of the Judith Mountains in Montana. Although some pipemakers were willing to experiment with this easily worked material, the majority of them regarded dickite pipes as too fragile to be practical. To prove this point Reuben Black Boy took a pipe bowl he had made of stone from the Pipestone Cliff site, lifted it high above his head and threw it down upon the wooden floor of his home. The pipe bowl suffered no injury. He said that he would be afraid even to drop a dickite pipe bowl on the floor, lest it break into many pieces.

METHODS OF MAKING PIPE BOWLS

276 Field information was obtained regarding the methods employed
124 by nine Blackfoot pipemakers (seven Piegan and two Blood Indians).
Their work represented the crafts methods of three generations of
276 pipemakers: (1) the generation that made pipes before the buffalo
178 were gone and the Indians settled down to reservation life (ante 1876); (2) the generation that learned to make pipes in the early Reservation Period, during the last quarter of the 19th century; and (3) the generation that learned pipemaking within the present century. Descriptions of the methods used by each of these pipemakers follow:

GREEN-GRASS-BULL, PIEGAN

276 The dean of the Piegan pipemakers in the early 1940's was a quiet,
[115] little octogenarian named Green-Grass-Bull, who was born ca. 1861.
[868] He told me that he had learned how to make pipes by watching older men drill and shape them. As a boy he had seen his grandfather, Double-Comes-Over-the-Hill, make pipes. He also had watched Weasel Horn, Little Deer, and Crow-Gut-Man make them. His own father, Crow Top, was not a pipemaker. Green-Grass-Bull recalled that Crow-Gut-Man would repair a hole punched in the side of a pipe

25: Ewers E,G-5 (1941-1951) 1963 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

pecially proud of the fact he had once carved a bowl in the form of a bird's head which he had traded to a fellow Piegan, Brockey, for a steer. Green-Grass-Bull understood that Brockey later gave this bowl to George Bird Grinnell, a well-known student of Blackfoot Indian culture at the turn of the century. [276] [532]

RUNNING CRANE AND HIS CHILDREN, PIEGANS

The most prominent Piegan pipemaker of the last quarter of the 19th century was Running Crane, Chief of the Lone Eater's Band, who died July 14, 1902, aged about 76 years. A pipe bowl owned by him in 1891 is pictured in plate 21, *a*. Running Crane was said to have sold his pipes for as much as $20 each and to have traded a pipe for "a good horse." [435]

Running Crane's daughter, Deathly-Woman-Cree-Medicine (born ca. 1868), was the only woman living on the Blackfeet Reservation in the decade of the 1940's who had made pipes. She told me that she had learned the craft by watching her father and her mother, Crane-Old-Woman (who also was a pipemaker), at work. She followed their example in using stone from the Running Crane quarry site for her pipe bowls. She followed her father's example in employing a sharpened piece of hoop-iron to drill the bowl and stem holes, in shaping the exterior of the bowl with a file and removing the file marks with sandrock. Mrs. Cree Medicine preferred a sage fire for blackening the surface of a pipe bowl. She also greased the bowl before placing it over the smoke of the fire. She knew that other pipemakers used a buckbrush fire for blackening pipe bowls, but she thought buckbrush made too hot a fire and might crack the stone. [115] [562] [868] [824]

Plate 23, *b*, is a field photograph of Mrs. Cree Medicine smoking a small elbow pipe of her own making. She told me that she had also fashioned pipe bowls of the Modified Micmac form, and had carved an effigy pipe in the form of a man's head. [171] [532]

Wades-in-the-Water (born ca. 1871), a son of Running Crane, and himself for many years Chief of the Indian Police of the Blackfeet Reservation, told me that he also had made pipe bowls from stone quarried at the Running Crane site. He also preferred a sage fire for blackening pipe bowls. After the smoke-blackened bowl cooled, he polished the surface with a piece of buckskin or cloth. [115] [824]

MIKE DAY RIDER, PIEGAN

A fourth member of the oldest generation living on the Blackfeet Reservation in the 1940's who had made pipe bowls was Mike Day Rider (born ca. 1868). Mike told me that he blackened his pipe bowls [115]

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

000 854 dressed skin, in which condition it passed the first year of its life. Upon the march it was carried upon its mother's back, either secured with straps or more commonly supported in a fold of her robe or blanket. It was sometimes thus carried while the mother pursued the ordinary avocations of the camp, but under such circumstances it was ordinarily set away in some suitable place. It was also a very common practice to suspend it by cords to the poles in the interior of the lodge, where it was permitted to hang 857 at rest or was swung back and forth as in a cradle. The sports of the children were such as comported with their savage life, being largely made up of imitations of the pur- 524 suits to which they were destined in after years. The girls played housekeeping after the Indian fashion of that art, built miniature lodges, collected little bundles of wood and made travails. The boys sometimes spun a top of ordinary construction, putting it in motion with the hands and then by a skillful touch repeated at intervals, keeping it spinning often for half an hour. They also had a game of ball, which was played by choosing sides, and then arraying themselves opposite each other, attempting by means of a wooden bat to drive a ball through each other's ranks to [237] a given point beyond. The ball used was about the size of a baseball and made of wound hair, covered with • 868 dressed skin. The boys were furnished with a bow and arrows at an early age and given lessons in horsemanship as soon as they could sit on a horse. A youth of twelve [858] years was usually a fair hunter and a good horseman. The girls were employed in the drudgery of the camp as soon as they were old enough to work, but the boys were exempted from all labor except that of herding horses. They were assigned to this duty as soon as they could be trusted to ride, which was about the age of six or seven years.

GAMES

524 Foremost among the games of the Blackfeet was one which from want of knowledge of its Indian name we may denominate Blackfoot billiards. A hard soil was chosen as the place of the game, where a space about six feet wide

boiling them in water with a quantity of colored trade cloth. This method was common in Maximilian's time. Nevertheless, despite the widespread use of commercial dyes, some Blackfeet women continued to employ native dyes within the memory of elderly Indians still living. Generally the plant dyes imparted a more delicate coloring to the quills than did the strong commercial dyes. 237 386 [177] [178]

The Quillworker's Tools and Methods

Elderly Blackfeet say that quillwork was regarded as a sacred craft by their people. Girls or young women were taught the craft by the older women. First the younger women were initiated ceremonially into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills. It was claimed that women who attempted to do quillwork without having first experienced this ceremony would surely "go blind" or suffer from a swelling of the finger joints. Then they were taught how to use the tools of the quillworker's craft and how to employ the various methods of quill sewing, plaiting and wrapping known to their elders. Quills of the same size in assorted colors were kept in long, cigar shaped, bladder containers until ready for use. The quillworker's kit also included one or more bone or metal awls for making holes in the skin, a quantity of sinew thread for passing through these holes in attaching the quills to the surface of the skin, and a bone or horn instrument for pressing and flattening the quills after they had been sewn to a flat surface. The Blackfeet quillworker held quills in her mouth to soften them, then flattened them between her teeth and put them in place at once. It was customary for a beginner to give her first piece of quillwork as an offering to the sun. 237 [462] [868] [153] [415] [412] 283 [413] [182]

Articles Decorated with Quills

Today quillwork is almost a lost art among the Blackfeet. However, accounts written more than a century ago refer to quillwork as a flourishing decorative art in which Blackfeet women were very pro- 237 531 294